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By William Vaughn Moody

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THE FIRE-BRINGER

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BY

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

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And when Zeus determined to destroy the men of the brazen age, Deukalion, being forewarned by Prometheus, built a boat, and putting into it food and drink, embarked with Pyrrha. Zeus sent a great rain from heaven, so that all men were overwhelmed, except a few who fled to the high places. Deukalion was driven upon the darkness of the waters until he came to Parnassus; and there, when the rains had abated, he landed and made sacrifice, praying for men to repeople the earth. Then Deukalion and Pyrrha took stones, and threw them over their heads; those which Deukalion threw became men, and those which Pyrrha threw became women. . . . Also Prometheus gave to them fire, bringing it secretly in a fennel stalk. When Zeus learned of this, he commanded Hephæstos to bind the body of Prometheus upon Mount Caucasus; and for the theft of fire Prometheus suffered this punishment. APOLLODORUS.

The Fire-Bringer is intended as the first member of a trilogy on the Promethean theme, of which *The Masque of Judgment*, already published, is the second member; but the connection between the present poem and the one which follows it in the dramatic sequence is informal, and the action of each is complete in itself.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Prometheus
Pandora
Deukalion
Pyrrha
Æolus
Lykophon
Alcyone
Rhodope
The Stone Men
The Earth Women
A Priest of Zeus

Various persons, survivors of Deukalion's flood.

THE FIRE-BRINGER

ACT I.

Darkness covers the scene. Faintly discernible, a mountain slope, backed by low cliffs, and beyond these the upper stretches of the mountain. In the cliffs a small cave, and before the mouth of the cave a rude altar of earth. Deukalion and Pyrrha are seated against the cliff; Æolus lies on his face at their feet.

Deukalion.

Thou hast slept long.

Pyrrha.

I saw a burning lamp
That passed between the levret and the dove
On Zeus's altar, and a smoke went up.

Deukalion.

Dreams: we are old. The green heart and the sear
He feeds with dreams; having some purpose in it,
Or else His idleness.

Pyrrha.

No lamp was here?
No fire, no light?

Deukalion.

Some fire-sparks in the eyes
Of dull bewildered beasts that came to gaze,
And dully moved again into the mist.
They have forgot their natures, even as we,
And those who tremble yonder on the heights
For fear the ebbing deep should mount again,
Breathing this darkness have forgot ourselves,
Our natures, and the motions of our souls.

Pyrrha.

Was not the Titan here? Seemed as he stood,
Behind him dawn, and in his lifted hand —

Deukalion.

He came, in darkness.

Pyrrha.

What word should he bring?

Deukalion.

I feigned to sleep. I had no heart for speech.

Pyrrha.

What did he, being with us?

Deukalion.

Stood awhile
Watching thy slumber; touched the sleeping head
Of Æolus; gazed upward to the heights;

Then vanished down the slope : and far below
Pandora sang.

Pyrrha.

Again ? —

Deukalion.

I say below
I heard her once, and once upon the peaks.
A little after, thunder tore the sky,
And 't was as if, far off, unearthly steeds
And cloudy chariots plunged across the dark.
Hush fell ; and, wailing like a broken bird,
I heard her dropping down from rock to rock.
Then for an endless season sat she here,
Her head between her knees, and all her hair
Spread like a night-pool in the autumn woods.
(*Pause.*)

Pyrrha.

Since the loosed raven flew, nor came again,

And since the black wind ceasing cast us here,
How long should the time be?

Deukalion.

A week, a month,
Measureless years, some moments. Time is dead,
Drowned in the waste of waters; or it lies
Somewhere abolished in the primal mud,
Caught in the rings of Python, whom at dusk
Of that last day, peering in terror forth
Before we shut the windows of our boat,
We heard hiss from the north and from the south,
And from the east and west, and saw him lay
His circles round the frothy rim of the world;
Or fled above the dark, Time softly there
Laughs through the abyss of radiance with the gods.

Pyrrha.

Think'st thou the gods laugh, now the colored world
They sought to when the spring was on the hills,
And had their stolen loves here, lies snuffed out,
A reeking lamp?

Deukalion.

Also therefore they laugh:
And therefore also do we bow us down
In fear and worship.

Pyrrha.

Ay, so. — What sayest thou?

Deukalion.

I say supernal laughter and smooth days
Fill up Heaven's golden room! For that the earth
Hath her dim sorrow and her shrouded face,
Should the gods grieve?

Pyrrha.

Husband, these breasts are dry
That fed our many sons; that head of thine
Is hoar with majesty of years and rule;
Much have I learned of thee and stored at heart
Concerning gods and men, the elder age
Of golden peace, the silver time between,
When lust and strife began to gnaw the world,
And these wild latter days. In the ark also,
Crouching in darkness, and upon this mount
Of weary darkness, hast thou held a torch
To light my mind to patience of these woes
Through understanding. Yet, behold, O king,
I understand not! Wherefore hath great Zeus,
Thy likeness in the heavens, bound like thee
To shepherd his wide people, sent his floods
To whelm them up, shut from the remnant clans
Sun, moon, and stars; and for a final curse
Drawn from the flints and dry boughs of the pine

The seed of divine fire, — yea, from our blood,
Yea, from the secret places of our frames
Sucked up the fire of passion and of will,
And left us here by the desolate black ebb
To rot and crumble with the crumbling world?
Wherefore is this, O king?

Deukalion.

Thyself hast said.

Pyrrha.

Yet know not. — Heavy of thought! Make me to know.

Deukalion.

Because these latter days are full of pride
And lust and wrangling; because his skies were vexed
With the might of rearing horses, and the wheels
Of chariots, and the young men blowing horns

Against his citadel; because the south
In all its chambers laughed a grievous red
Out of the vineyards of its wantonness;
Because our fitful pulses, when they fell,
Sang grief, division, terror, shame, and loss,
Troubling that harmony which is the breath
Of the gods' nostrils, yea the delicate tune
To which they pace their souls, and act with joy
Their several ministries.

Pyrrha.

Why then so long
Do these flat slugs, that once were statured men,
Cling to the oozy earth-rind He would cleanse
For some new perfect race? Why, when thou heard'st
Prometheus whisper thee his fearful news
That evening by the farm-gate, did'st thou grant
No sleep to slave or free, till from the hills

The mighty pines were dragged, the hull-
beams laid,
The roof-tree raised, the doors and windows
set,
And through the muttering thunder all thy
house
Led in to safety? When the holy fire,
Brought by thine own hands from the hearth,
went out,
Why did'st thou bare thy white head to the
storm
To fetch another brand, and, finding none,
Come forth with lamentation? Why were
seen,
Through all thy mountain kingdom, runners
stripped,
And panted words, and flying to the peaks?
Thou answerest not; but leaning darkly
down
Over the head of little Æolus,
Fingerest a tarnished lock from out the dust!
Speak, father! Through this numbing gloom,
this death,
This veil of years, thy silence pierceth me.

Deukalion.

I try to feel again the thing I felt,
But cannot, so the sinews of my soul
Are loosened. Yet 't was for this radiant head
That all was done defiantly toward God.
His father Hellen and our other sons
Were wandering, or had poured their life-blood out
In obscure battle. This alone was left,
This little flower of Greece, for whom I dreamed
Kingdoms and glories, plaudits, trophies, palms,
And sound of deathless lyres across the world.
For his sake, fumbling in the gloom I built
This altar, and have groped about the rocks
For live thing worthy sacrifice; have lain
In bush and hollow till some dreaming bird
Or sleep-besotted beast fell to my hands,
And rent the same, and offered it with groans
Upon the smokeless altar.

Pyrrha.

Once He heard,
Thou knowest.

Deukalion.

I know. We will not think thereon!

Pyrrha.

The unwrought shapes, the unmoulded attitudes!
The tongues of earth, the stony craving eyes!

Deukalion.

Unto the husband was the wife's desire
No longer, nor the husband's to the wife.
The young maid lay undreamed on by the boy.
The little life that was, was sinking fast
Or sunk beyond recall. God's doubtful voice
Out of the wind of the oak was fair to hear,
Seeming to promise store of goodly men,
And women vessels for the flowing life
To enter and be spilled not. There was hope.
Prometheus said not nay. Beside the verge

Of the spent flood did we not see him stoop,
Kneading the clay in with the roilèd foam,
Breathing and breathing with his fiery breath,
Then cry upon his work, and scattering it
Rise up in haste and wrath? Yet here was hope!

Pyrrha.

Yea, as I flung the clods, and stooped and flung,
I dared not look behind, for hope; and thou,
Stooping and flinging the allotted stones,
Seemed clothed in prime of years, foreseeing earth
With a big breed replenished; till on a sudden
Terribly out of the gloom the Titan cried;
Then we, ceasing, beheld, and fled in fear.

Deukalion.

Would they might sit as now, removed apart,
Brooding upon the ground; nor come again
With vague slow motion up the shrouded slope,
Filling the mist with formless utterance,

As craving to be born! My men of stone
In dreams appal me with their lifted hands
Of threat and supplication, and by thee
Stand the earth-women pleading.

Pyrrha.

Ere I slept
I was anhungered. Searching for sweet roots
I crawled and groped my way, till I was come
Unto a brackish water cupped and held
From that same sea whereof the gurge but then
Lessened its roar far down the craggèd dark.
There by the pool they sat, with faces lift
And brows of harsh attention; in their midst
Pandora bowed, and sang a doubtful song,
Its meaning faint or none, but mingled up
Of all that nests and housekeeps in the heart,
Or puts out in lone passion toward the vast
And cannot choose but go.

Deukalion.

In mockery sent,
In mercy be she taken, or on the hills

Drinking this darkness, wither and be changed
To such as we are!

Pyrrha.

Thinkest thou that Zeus
In anger made her thus?

Deukalion.

'T will be so. When she came
Our minds were dim and fearful.

Pyrrha.

Very dim,
And blurred with fearful dream; but — By
the boat
We crouched, and hearkened if the water still
Drew downward, or was crawling up again
To seize us unaware; the mist was full
Of beasts and men in wretched fellowship;
Then suddenly a breath like morning blew;
I saw as 't were a shadowy sun and moon
Go up the blinded sky; far off yet near
I heard Prometheus speaking, and her voice
In low and happy answer.

Deukalion.

He would catch
The hurlèd thunder-bolt, and forge from it
A reaper's hook; the vials of white wrath
He spills to make a wine-cup for a feast;
Curses he knows not from the gifts of love;
And in the shadow of this death, even here,
As low as from her pitch of pride earth 's fallen,
He will be plotting that whereby to climb
And lift us high above the peaks of God
One dizzy instant, ere we fall indeed
And he with us forever!

Pandora (sings, below).

Along the earth and up the sky
The Fowler spreads his net:
O soul, what pinions wild and shy
Are on thy shoulders set?
What wings of longing undeterred
Are native to thee, spirit bird?

Pyrrha.

Hearken, is 't not

Her song again? Far down among the vales
Did'st hear it? Faint and far, but —
Hearken still!

Pandora (sings).

What sky is thine behind the sky,
For refuge and for ecstasy?
Of all thy heavens of clear delight
Why is each heaven twain,
O soul! that when the lure is cast
Before thy heedless flight,
And thou art snared and taken fast
Within one sky of light,
Behold, the net is empty, the cast is vain,
And from thy circling in the other sky the lyric laughters rain!

Deukalion.

Through the gorge there — a shadow —
Pyrrha, look!
Over the torrent bed and up the slope
Something comes on, in stature more than man,
And swifter.

Pyrrha.

O swift-comer, it is thou!
None other, thou, wind-ranger, bringer-in!
Child, be awake! Prometheus!

Prometheus (entering, lifts Pyrrha).

Do not so;
These hands come poor; these feet bring nothing back.

Pyrrha.

Thy hands come filled with thee, thy feet from thence
Have brought thee hither; it is gifts enough.

Deukalion.

Is there no hope?

Pyrrha.

Speak! speak! Through this dark cloud
The eyes of Zeus's eagle cannot pierce
Or any listener heed. Have we a hope?

Prometheus.

From earth and all this lower realm of air
The fire is gone.

Pyrrha.

Thy searchings! — Giveth ease
If but to hear thy voice.

Prometheus (seats himself beside the cliff).

I clambered down
Old earthquake-cloven rifts and monstrous chasms
Where long ago the stripling Titans peered
At play and dared not venture, — found me out
Flint-stones so buried in disastrous rock
I thought the Darkener sure had passed them by;
But not a spark lived in them. Past the walls
Rhipean, and the Arimaspian caves,
I sought the far hyperborean day,
But not a banner of their rustling light
Flapped through the sagging sky, nor did the Fates

Once fling their gleaming shuttles east or
west.
By Indian Nysa and the Edonian fount
Of Hæmus long I lurked, in hope to find
Young Dionysus as he raced along
And wrest his pine-torch from him, or to
snare
Some god-distracted dancing ægipan,
And from his garland crush a wine of fire
To light the passion of the world again
And fill man's veins with music; but there
went
A voice of sighing through the ghostly
woods,
And up the mountain pastures in the mist
Desolate creatures sorrowed for the god.
Across the quenched Ægean, where of old
The shining islands sang their stasimon,
Forever chorusing great hymns of light
Round Delos, through the driving dark I
steered
To seek Hephæstos on his Lemnian mount;
But found him not. His porches were o'er-
thrown,

His altar out, and round his faded peak
The toilèd Cyclops, bowing huge and dim,
Uncouthly mourned. . . .
(*He starts up, and gazes toward the mountain-top.*)
Soon will the smouldering life
Cease even to smoulder! I must forth again.
But where? But where?
(*Pause.*)

Deukalion.

Where suppliants still must go,
But with the act of suppliance, and the mind.
Not stiff and rebel brows, not daring deeds
Be of availment, but to clasp the knees
And touch the beard of Zeus. Within his house
Still lives the sacred fire. 'T is there to have,
If one by sacrifice and rites full-brought
Could find the way.

Prometheus (laughs).

'T is there to have; thou sayst!
One thistledown of fortune to the good

And 't had been ravished thence, an hour ago,
To better uses!

Deukalion.

'T was but so long since
The thunder spake. Across the vault of heaven
Plunged down the shadowy furnishment of war.

Pyrrha.

Thou 'rt wounded! Lo, this arm hangs helpless by! —
O, rash and overbold! Thou — thou hast dared —
The hermæ holding vigil at heaven's bound
Have cried thy name out, and the shadows vast
Of perished gods, beside the inmost hearth,
Have spoken of thee, that the soul of Zeus
Hath shook with dreams of evil to his house!

Deukalion.

How might'st thou pass the terror of his ward,

Tread his serenest citadel, and come
Not thunder-blasted hither, with slight wound?

Prometheus (flings himself again upon the ground).

When each great cycle of Olympian years
Rounds to its end, there comes upon the gods
Mysterious compulsion. As a gem
Borne from a lighted chamber into dusk,
Heaven of its splendor disarrays itself,
Hushes its dyes, and all the whispering sphere
Hangs like a moon of change. Knowing not why,
Nor unto what, each brooding deity
Wends to the sacred old Uranian field,
Where bloom old flowers, which, in the morn of time,
Forgotten gods did garland for their hair,
To celebrate some long-forgotten joy
That then did pierce the heart of the young world.

Here gather they, with mute and doubtful looks
At one another, waiting till She comes,
Mnemosyne, mother of thought and tears,
Remembrancer, and bringer out of death
Burden of longing and sweet-fruited song.
Then toward the upper windows of the stars,
The roof and dome of things, the place supreme
Of speculation inward on the frame
Of life create, and outward on the abyss
That moans and welters in the wind of love,
She leadeth up their shining theory,
And there they stand and wonder on the time
When they were not and when they shall not be.
This was my moment; for I knew 't was near,
And laired away among the steep-up crags of day
That bastion and shore-fast his pearl of power,

His white acropolis. Soft as light I passed
The perilous gates that are acquainted forth,
The walls of starry safety and alarm,
The pillars and the awful roofs of song,
The stairs and colonnades whose marble work
Is spirit, and the joinings spirit also, —
And from the well-brink of his central court
Dipped vital fire of fire, flooding my vase,
Glutting it arm-deep in the keen element.
Then backward swifter than the osprey dips
Down the green slide of the sea, till — Fool, O fool!
'T was in my hands! 'T was next my bosom! Fierce
Sang the bright essence past my scorching cheek,
Blown up and backward as I dropped and skimmed
The glacier-drifts, cataracts, wild moraines,
And walls of frightful plunge. Upon the shore

Of this our night-bound wretched earth I paused,
Lifted on high the triumph of my hands,
And flung back words and laughter. As I dropped,
The dogs of thunder chased me at the heels,
A white tongue shook against me in the dark,
And lo, my vase was rended in my hands,
And all the precious substance that it held
Spread, faded, and was gone,—was quenched, was gone!

(*Pause.*)

Deukalion (in a low voice).

We cannot thank thee, though thy love be love.
Great is thy heart; we cannot praise thy deed.

Prometheus.

It was not therefore done!

Pyrrha.

For our poor praise,

For our poor love and praise ; albeit now
The shouting of thy loud blood drowneth all !

Deukalion (after a long silence).

Prometheus, thou hast thought to be our friend,
Our blood-kin, our indweller ; hast indued
Vesture of our mortality and pain, —
Wherefore if not for pride, for fiercest pride ?
Thou hast found out wild pathways for our treading,
Whispered us Nature's secrets, given to our hand
The spirit of fire and all its restless works,
Yea, blown aflame our all too eager blood
Till earth went red and reeling like a torch
When Dionysus calls under the moon.
Look round thee, O storm-sower, what we reap
Now in the season's fullness ! Is it good ?

Pride was thy lesson, and earth learned so well
That she is fallen more low than she was high.

Prometheus.

And shall be higher than that height she was,
By all this depth she has fallen!

Deukalion.

In that day
Let Chronos lift his old abolished head
From mid Lethean mallows, and dim-tongued
Call to thy shadowy brothers where they dream,
And leading up his faint forgetful host,
Rive the great diadem from Zeus's brow.
Then may thy stormy will at last be thine;
But as for now, even for thy earth's dear sake,
Be humble, O be humble! Bind thy hair
With willow, and put on the iron ring,

That so, by walking fearfully at last,
We bend Heaven from its anger. Else shall man
Suffer such woes as now we muse not of,
And thou such punishment as quails the heart
To think on.

Prometheus.

Either now with violent hand
We snatch salvation home, or here we sit
Till Python, hissing softly up the dark,
Dizzy our lapsèd souls, and headlong down
We drop into his jaws, which from the first —
See, the boy wakes!

Æolus (waking).

Give me to eat and drink.

Pyrrha.

Water and roots I hoarded in the cave.
I will go fetch them forth.

(*She goes into the cave.*)

Deukalion.

Was 't well with thee
In slumber, child?

Æolus.

I know not. I did sleep.

Pyrrha (coming out).

The roots are gnawed, and the sweet water spilled.
Be patient, Æolus, I will seek thee more.

Deukalion.

Stay; let me fetch them rather. Thou wilt fall,
Or meet some fear. The sluggish serpents lie
And will not move, though trodden, save to sting.

Pyrrha.

Thou knowest not where the roots are still to find.

Deukalion (rising painfully).

Together then. Ah, me! Where is thy hand?

Pyrrha.

Here, father. No, this way!

(*They go slowly out, feeling along the cliff.*)

Prometheus.

Poor poisoned flower,
Poor droop-head, down again!

(*Stoops over Æolus.*)

Woe for the house,
Woe for the vineyard, woe for the orchard croft,
The oil-tree and the place of standing corn!
Woe for the ships of venture! Woe on Him
Who sows and will not gather; shame and woe
Who sendeth forth and when the message comes
Makes deaf and strange!

(*He sinks down beside the cliff.*)

O Mother Clymene,
What of the song-thrush and the morning star,
The moon deep-hung with increase down the dawn,

The wet fields brightening fast, the hour thy pangs
Came on thee for my sake? What of the earth
Thou loved'st so well and taught'st me well to love?
— Hears not! 'T was long ago.

(*His head falls upon his knees.*)

One deep, deep hour!
To drop ten thousand fathoms softly down
Below the lowest heaving of life's sea,
Till memory, sentience, will, are all annulled,
And the wild eyes of the must-be-answered Sphinx,
Couchant at dusk upon the spirit's moor,
Blocking at noon the highway of the soul,
At morn and night a spectre in her gates, —
For once, for one deep hour —

(*He lifts his head slowly, and peers into the darkness.*)

Say who ye are
That fill the night with deeper heaviness!
Break up your strangling circle and come out.
More, more, and wretcheder! A spirit pass
Into some old and unachievèd world,

A storm-fall in some wood of rooted souls!
But O, what spirit-piercing flower of life
Blooms from the wasteful heap?

(*From among the crouching figures of the Stone Men and Earth Women, Pandora's voice is heard.*)

Pandora (sings).

Of wounds and sore defeat
I made my battle stay;
Wingèd sandals for my feet
I wove of my delay;
Of weariness and fear,
I made my shouting spear;
Of loss, and doubt, and dread,
And swift oncoming doom
I made a helmet for my head
And a floating plume.
From the shutting mist of death,
From the failure of the breath,
I made a battle-horn to blow
Across the vales of overthrow.
O hearken, love, the battle-horn!
The triumph clear, the silver scorn!
O hearken where the echoes bring,

Down the grey disastrous morn,
Laughter and rallying!

Prometheus.

Thou! Is it thou?

Pandora (comes from among the recumbent figures, holding something aloft).

Where is Prometheus?

Prometheus.

I am I, thou knowest.

Pandora.

I had a gift for him. Where is he gone?

Prometheus.

Give me thy gift. 'T will bring Prometheus back
To the high home and fortress of his soul,
Where thou and he made gladness.

(*She gives him a fennel stalk.*)

What is this?

Pandora.

A hollow reed. I found it on the hills.

Prometheus.

Such used the mothers in the upland farms
Fetch unpolluted fire in, once a year,
To light their hearths anew; such would the girls
Crown with fir-cone and smilax when they heard
The frenzied pipe call in the midnight hills,
And whisperings of anguish dimmed their blood.

Pandora.

Such had Prometheus, were he here again,
Wreathed for his listening earth; such had he filled
With unpolluted fire, and kindled new
The hearth-cheer of the world.

Prometheus.

Earth, sea, and air,
The caverned clouds, the chambers of the storm,

Yea, the thrice perilous alps and crags of heaven
Have watched the robber lurk, and laughed at him!
Do not thou mock him too!

Pandora.

Him I will mock
Who, being thirsty, climbs not to the spring,
But meanly drinks at rillet and low pool,
And thirsteth still the more.

Prometheus.

The spring? The spring?
(*He hesitates, then starts up with a wild gesture.*)
I could have done it once! I could have done it!

Pandora (coming nearer).

Stranger!

Prometheus.

Hush, look! They rise at me again!

The Stone Men.

When earth did heave as the sea, at the lifting up of the hills,
One said, "Ye shall wake and be; fear not, ye shall have your wills."
We waited patient and dumb; and ere we thought to have heard,
One said to us "Stay!" and "Come!" — a dim and a mumbled word.
Mortise us into the wall again, or lift us up that we look therefrom!

The Earth Women.

The night, the rain, and the dew from of old had lain with us,
The suns and winds were our lovers too, and our husbands bounteous:
But lo, we were sick at heart when we leaned from the towers of the pine,
We yearned and thirsted apart in the crimson globes of the vine.
O tell us of them that hew the tree, bring us to them that drink the wine!
(*They disappear.*)

Prometheus.

Only a moment did they strain their brows
In weary question at me, ere they turned
And melted down into the blotting dark!

(*He starts slowly down the slope.*)

Pandora.

They go to find Prometheus.

Prometheus.

Of these stones
To build my rumoring city, basèd deep
On elemental silence; in this earth
To plant my cool vine and my shady tree
Whose roots shall feed upon the central fire!

(*He turns to Pandora.*)

Love!

Pandora.

Where thou goest, I am; there, even now
I stand and cry thee to me.

Prometheus (starts again down the slope).

Yea, I come,
I come; to find somewhere through the
piled gloom

A mountain path to unimagined day,
Build all this anger into walls of war
Not dreamed of, dung and fatten with this death
New fields of pleasant life, and make them teem
Strange corn, miraculous wine!

Pandora (watching him disappear).
Prometheus, lord!

ACT II.

Scene as before. The space below the cliffs is deserted; on the slope above, voices of men and women are heard.

First Voice.

Peer farther down! Hear'st thou the waters yet?

Second Voice.

With sea-slime and with lichen-tangled shells
The rocks are strewn, and ocean-breathing things
Gasp in the shallow pools; but the main flood
Is sunken further than the ear can hark.

(*They descend.*)

A Young Man's Voice (above).

A little strength, sister, a little strength!
Nay then, I die with thee.

An Old Man's Voice.

My son, my son,
Where art thou? Answer me!

Another Voice.

Peace. He is dead.
I saw him sink upon the farther slope.
Back to him, if thou wilt; thou 'lt come too late.

Chorus of Men.

The fallen must lie where they fell,
For the dead cannot succor the dead.

Chorus of Women.

O when through the valleys of hell
Shall the light of our Saviour be shed?

(*They descend. Others appear from above.*)

First Voice (above).

Trust not the sea! Look where the frothing lip
Curls off the giant fang! Back to the heights!

Second Voice.

Nay, fallen are the waters. It is past.

Third Voice.

The life we hurled from off the temple crag
With supplications and with piercing song,
Has made thus much appeasement. One more life
Will roll away the ocean of main dark;
Unless we be forever doomed to lie
As now, blind bulks of sleep, or hunger-bitten
To creep the stagnant bottom of the world.

Fourth Voice.

This way, 't is said, Deukalion carried him.
Follow on, yonder, where the cliff breaks down.

(*They descend; others follow. From the side, below the cliffs, a muttering group presses in; in their midst are Deukalion and Pyrrha, who shield Æolus against the cliff. The space about the altar is filled with indistinct figures.*)

Deukalion.

I am king, hear ye, am I not the king?
Higher than I is none. Take me! Why him,

Little of strength and wisdom? I am wise,
My cunning brain is stronger than a host.
Though this my spear-arm be a little fallen
From when it led you out against the north,
I am more terrible and mighty now,
An old, much-seeing spirit. In my death
The gods will taste a pleasure and be soothed.
But from this child, this playmate — look ye here —
This piece of summer's carelessness, this tuft
Of hyssop planted by the wells of glee, —
What honor should the dread gods have on him?
They shall have me, Deukalion —

A Man's Voice.

Bring not on us
With wordy shifts, the last steep horror down!
That is no babe thy withered arm hides there.
We know him; we have seen. If he might live

His name would fill the future, and make big
The story of his folk. He is our best,
Our soul of price, and him the gods demand,
Together with the maid, whose father here—
O how much more a kinglier will than thou!—

Deukalion.

Where art thou, Lykophon? Mine eyes are dim.

Lykophon.

Here by the altar.

Deukalion.

And thy child?

Lykophon.

Here too.

Deukalion.

Thy heart is firm to do it? Thou wilt live,
And think on 't after? Ay, remember that!
Hast weighed that with the rest?

Lykophon.

He was my slave,
Whose crazed old voice cried yonder of his son.
Was it to win a remnant of dim days,
A handful of poor mealtimes and to-beds,
He offered him? To watch some mornings rise,
Some evenings fall, fringing with fearful light
The cliff he hurled him from to the hungry sea?
Am I a lesser than my bondman is?

Deukalion.

Yea, ye will teach me, and I'll bear it tame!
I know what fits a king, what he must pay
In peace of soul and heart's blood for his folk.
King-drownling of an island of drowned dogs,
Wolves, snakes, and field-rats, crept from out the flood

For hunger and the hell-bred fog to rot!
Rot ye! I 'll keep my own.

Lykophon (to the crowd).

Back, back, I say!
The gods despise enforcèd offerings.
When the heart brings its dearest and its last
Then only will they hear — if then, if then!

Deukalion.

Be this life taken, what is left? O friends,
O wretched children, lift your hearts and eyes,
Look through the death-dark hither and be known
On what you ask; think on yourselves, on me,
On them that keep the heights, and who lie strewn
Along the downward path. See how the price
Doth shame the purchase!

A Man's Voice.

We have thought on these,
And find they are our brothers and our friends,
Our parents, children, wives; and that they die.

Lykophon.

Not they alone. The past, the future dies.

A Woman's Voice.

Hark what he says! He knows not, yet he says!
None of you know. I have cried unto you
And told you of it, but you will not know!
You will not listen what I carry here
Under my heart, and feed and shelter now,
That then shall be the bread and wine of the world,
The torch and sword and lyre, the water-brook,
The lion-gate and wall of many towers,
The marshaler of dances, — there, O there
Beyond the shadow and the sorrow, far
In God's new garden, His green virgin mount!

Chorus of Women.

Would, would we might be silent, for we know
Though now He puts us by,
Though now He heeds us not nor hearkeneth,
The groping of our anguish up the sky
Will wean and wear Him so
That in the vexèd sendings of His breath
He will breathe out a deeper than the gloom
Of our deep doom,
And put in death a sting sharper than death.

(*Distant thunder.*)

Chorus of Men.

Seize them and stifle up their irking lips!
He grudgeth at us, but forgetteth where
He felt our spreaded palms, and was aware
Of fierce and tedious prayer.
Yonder of us night darkens with His frown;
Far off, and all forgetfully He drips
His drowsy anger down.

(*The thunder rolls nearer, and terrific storm sweeps over the scene*).

A Woman's Voice.

Ah, no, He smiteth us! His lightning leaps
From end to end of the world!

A Man's Voice.

His thunder shakes
The pillars of the dark. Lo, up above
The roof of darkness ruins and lets in
Thrice horrible night!

Another Voice.

Alas, the wind, the wind!
The trampling and the bellowing herds of rain
Loose on the mountain slopes! Bow down!
Bow down!

Deukalion (gropes forward through the tempest and lifts Æolus upon the altar).

Lord, stretch thy hand and take him! He is thine.

Lykophon.

What criest thou, Deukalion?

Deukalion.

Take the child.
The gods' dark will be done! I am content.
(*He falls.*)

Lykophon (bending over him).

Deukalion!

Pyrrha.

Husband! Father! Speak, look up!

Lykophon (rising).

The king is down. Here in his mighty room
I stand up over you! Where is the priest
Who serves the altar on God's mountain top?

A Man's Voice.

Yonder he crouches, and his sacred eyes
Are set athwart; he wanders in his wit.

Lykophon.

Prepare him for his ministry. . . . And thou,

Alcyone, sweet head! Thou keepsake life
Left me for memory, thou precious seal
Stamped with her mystic love-sign unto me,
I put her blessing on thee; and do thou
Kiss me, and put her blessing upon me
For this I do.

(*He lifts her upon the altar.*)

Weep not. — Room for the priest!

(*The priest advances, holding the sacrificial knife.*)

Pyrrha (flings herself before the altar).

Hold off your hands, hold off! The king
is fallen,
And falling spake somewhat. But I, who
drank
Of his deep will, who ever was and am
His heart's high furtherer, cry over him
Ye shall not touch them yet! Not yet ye
shall!
Not till Prometheus comes or makes a
sign!

Lykophon.

Thou see'st the gray eternities of time

That we have waited, till our minds are crazed
With watching, and our all o'er-hearkened ears
Hear silence roar and mutter like a sea;
And still he comes not, and no word comes past
The crouching places and close lairs of death.

A Man's Voice.

Yet he will come: his haughty soul shall not
Be hindered of its walk.

Priest.

Behind the wall
A thief was taken, and his sons at dawn
Said "Now he comes with purchase; we will feast," —
Even while the ravens on his glazing eyes
Were feasted, and the master of the house
Said, "I have judged him and forgotten him."

Ye blind and credulous, ye whispering
things!
Mutterers, collusioners! What wait we
for?

Chorus of Women.

O that our spirits might not thus
Afflict us, making pictures on the dark,
And giving silence tongues to cry against
us!
For though we shut our ears and will not
hark,
And blind our eyes from seeing, he is
there;
The dust of heavenly battle dims his hair,
The large gods close about him, he is down;
Now thrice three times about the shining
town
The thunder-wingèd chariot drags his corse;
And now they bind him to the wingèd
horse
With chains of burning light; the portent
rears away
O'er prairies of insufferable day!

Chorus of Men.

'Twixt Berenice's tangled hair
And that blue region of the morning where
The bright wind-shaken Lyre
Sheds down the dawn its spilth of silver fire,
We saw him stoop and run upon the air,
Shielding from region gusts the stolen flame;
But from a steep cloud warping up the west
A curse of lightning came.
With tort-flung neck and clutchèd breast
He fell, a ruined star;
And now the char
Had quenched itself with hissing, in the sea,
But lo, again his soul flamed gloriously!
The eagle tempest, gyring from its place,
Seized him, and whirled,
And hung him on the plunging prow of the world,
To shed the anguish of his face
Upon the reefs and shoals of space,
To lighten with the splendor of his pain
Earth's pathway through the main,

Though death was all her freightage, and
the breath
That swelled her sails was death.

A Man's Voice.

He will not come. I heard an old bard once
Sing of him, saying Titan Iapetos
Fathered him not; his mother Clymene,
Wandering in the morning of the world,
Suffered human embraces. 'T will be so,
For he is human-minded, and too slight
To wrest from God's hand the withholden
fire.

Second Voice.

Hearken! One sings upon the upper slopes.

Third Voice.

'T is she, the other gift in mockery sent,
Pandora.

Fourth Voice.

Haunting, cruel to the heart.
She opens sunny doors, which ere we look
Are closed foreverlasting, and their place
Not to be guessed.

Fifth Voice.

This was another thing
Prometheus did. Whom the gods sent in wrath
To make us know how wondrous was the life
That inchmeal they took from us, even her
He chose out for his love, and even here
He made his bridals.

Sixth Voice.

Some say 't is not so,
But she Pandora is a child he had
Before the sea rose and the night came down,
And others say his sister, whom he fetched
From Hades, where she was with Clymene,
Being childed late, after the Titans fell.

A Woman's Voice.

Hush, hark, the pouring music! Never yet
The pools below the waterfalls, thy pools,
Thy dark pools, O my heart — !

A Young Man's Voice.

Delirious breast!
She jetteth gladness as a sacred bird,

That o'er the springtime waves, at large of
dawn,
Off Delos, to the wakening Cyclades
Declares Apollo.

A Girl's Voice.

Once more, once more, O sisters, ere we die
I will lift up my cry
To Him who loved us though He puts us
by.
For yonder singer with the golden mouth
Hath fallen upon us privily as falls
The still spring out of the south
On the shut passes and locked mountain
walls,
And suddenly from out my frozen heart
Dark buds of sorrow start,
Freshets of thought through my faint being
roll,
And dim remembrance gropes and travails
in my soul.

I will cry on Him piercingly
By reason of my girlhood how it ailed,
Then when I seemed

Unto myself a thing myself had dreamed,
And for whose sake the visionary Spring
High in the chilly meadows where she stood
With lips of passionate listening
In the sea-wind above the moaning wood,
Scattered her discrowned hair, and bowed
herself, and wailed.
And then, a little after, came a day
That loosed my bands of ailing all away;
For somewhere in the wilds a spirit spoke,
The ghostly earth went past me like a stream,
And swooning suddenly aloft I woke
To an intenser dream.
Would mine were that same spirit's tongue
to tell
The joy that then befell, —
Rather befell not, but refrained,
Lurked and withdrew,
And was an inner freshness in the dew,
A look inscrutable the stars put on,
A fount of secret color in the dawn,
After day-fall a daylight that remained
Brighter than what was gone.
O sisters, kiss the numbing death away

From off my heavy lips, and let me say
How fair my summoned spirit blossomed in its clay,
When the girls sang of me that I was his
Whose voice I heard treading the wilderness;
And I had followed him as the homing dove
That furtive way he went,
Till now he had brought me up into his tent,
Where flutes made mention of love, and wild throats said
With wine and honey of love were his tables spread,
Also the banner over us was love!
(*Pause.*)

A Woman's Voice.

Look, Pandora comes!
See, there above the cliff she glimmers down,
And darker shapes come with her.

A Man's Voice.

The big seed
Deukalion and Pyrrha sowed in hope
To reap in terror; the scarce-featured sons
Of stone, and daughters of the sullen glebe.

Deukalion (waking).

Pyrrha! Where art thou?

Pyrrha.

'T is my face thou feelest,
Thy groping hands are even on me, father.

Deukalion.

Who are these? How is 't with us? O wherefore
Gaze ye all thus aloft?

Pyrrha.

Pandora comes.

Deukalion.

I see naught. Since a little while mine eyes
And brain are faded. Help mine eyes to see.

Pyrrha.

She pauses on the margin of the cliff.
About her are the shapes of them who rose
Behind us, when we sowed the heavy seed.
Her either hand is on a kneeling head,

Female and male; her forehead more than
theirs
Is lifted up in yearning, and her face
Is like the lyrist's when at first he waits
And drifts his heart up through the cloudy
strings.

A Man's Voice.

Take heed there to the lad, where he hath
risen
His height upon the altar! And the maid
Is risen. Look to them!

Pyrrha.

Children! Æolus!
What is 't with you? What search ye in
the heavens?
O, to what high thing do your spirits strain
And your hands tremble up?

Æolus and Alcyone (looking and pointing
upward).

The stars! The stars!

(*Pause.*)

Deukalion.

Why hath so deep a hush fallen on the night?
I heard a whispering cry. What whisper they?

Pyrrha.

Æolus pointed — whispering of the stars.

Æolus.

Æolus — stars. Pyrrha!

Pyrrha.

With thee!

Deukalion.

Spakest thou
Of stars?

Pyrrha.

Ay, so he whispered!

Deukalion.

Thou — and thou?

Pyrrha.

Nothing, nothing. My soul was as a lake

Spread out in utter darkness; to its depth
There pierced a silvery trembling —

Deukalion.

Look again.
Wife, cease to pray! Look out again!

Pyrrha.

The dark
Gathers and flees, and the wide roof of night
Leans in as it would break; the mountain-
ous gloom
Unmoors, and streameth on us like a sea.
O Earth, lift up thy gates! It is the stars!
It is the stars! It is the ancient stars!
It is the young and everlasting stars!

Pandora (sings).

Because one creature of His breath
Sang loud into the face of death,
Because one child of His despair
Could strangely hope and wildly dare,
The Spirit comes to the Bride again,
And breathes at her door the name of the
child;

" This is the son that ye bore me! When
Shall we kiss, and be reconciled? "

Furtive, dumb, in the tardy stone,
With gropings sweet in the patient sod,
In the roots of the pine, in the crumbled
cone,
With cries of haste in the willow-rod, —
By pools where the hyla swells his throat
And the partridge drums to his crouching mate,
Where the moorland stag and the mountain
goat
Strictly seek to the ones that wait, —
In seas aswing on the coral bar,
In feasting depths of the evening star,
In the dust where the mourner bows his head,
In the blood of the living, the bones of the
dead, —
Wounded with love in breast and side,
The Spirit goes in to the Bride!

Pyrrha.

The veil that hid the holy sky is rent;
The vapors ravel down; and a bright wind

Blows, that the planets and the shoalèd worlds
Stoop from their dance, and wheel and shout again,
Scattering influence as a mænad shakes
Pine sparks and moon-dew from her whirling hair.
And hark, below, the many-voicèd earth,
The chanting of the old religious trees,
Rustle of far-off waters, woven sounds
Of small and multitudinous lives awake,
Peopling the grasses and the pools with joy,
Uttering their meaning to the mystic night!

A Man's Voice.

Within my soul there is a rushing down
Like darkness, and my being, as a heaven,
Soareth apparent, as a heaven with stars.
A heaven hung with stars my spirit is,
And all among them walks a wind of will,
Uttering life, and purpose, and desire!

A Woman's Voice.

O for the dreaming herbs, the whispering trees,

And rustling, far-off waters of my heart!
O for the mystic night risen within me!
The multitudinous life, the busy sounds
Of woven love, the hushed and pouring love,
The pouring love and stillness of the night!

Deukalion.

Wife, wife, what falleth since?

Pyrrha.

A stir of joy
Troubles the fields of air 'twixt star and star.
Across the quivering acres, by and large,
An unimaginable Reaper goes,
And where he walks the heavens are seldom-sown;
Till o'er wan earth the spreaded heavens are bare,
Save for one mighty star that gathers light
And stands like a flushed singer telling glory.
Now he, now even he has no dominion,
For he has looked behind him to the mountains,
O, he has looked up to the lovely mountains

Of the unimagined morning, and has hearkened
The pouring of the chill, eternal urns!
Over the solemn world gray habitation
Wonders at habitation. Room by room,
The heavens tremble and put on delight,
Ignorant one to another why it is
The festal wish compels them. They are brightened
Under the feet of many breathless spirits,
Who, lifting up their hands by the springs of ocean,
Cried "Pæan!" and "O, Hymen!" As a stream
Silvereth in a wind-start, heaven is brightened
Under the speed and striving of those spirits, —
Who now, even now dissolve, and leave behind them
Only their gladness and their speed; for now
Through all its height and frame of living light,
Through all its clear creation, breathing depths

And fleeing distances, the sacred sky
Pulses and is astonished like a heart;
It looketh inward and bethinks itself,
Outward, and putteth all its question by,
To shine and soar and sing and be at one!—
Nearhand the slopes drink light, and far about
Among the mountain places, headlands, cliffs,
Lone peaks, and brotherhoods of battlement
Shout, having apprehended. — Paler grow
The gulfs of shadowy air that brim the vales;
As ocean bateth in her thousand firths,
The gray and silver air draws down the land.
The little trees that climb among the rocks
As high as they can live, pierce with their spires
The shoaling mist, swim softly into light,
And stand apparent, shapely, every one
A dream of divine life, a miracle.
Chasms are cloven in the violet
And amethystine waters of the air;
Forests and winding rivers of the plain
Are given and withdrawn; a moment since
I saw, I thought I saw a strength of hill

Uplifted far below us, built upon
With what was once a lordly place of souls,
A carved and marble place of puissant souls,
Builded to such strong music that the sea
Had hardly heaved one lintel from its post,
Or marred one face of all the sculptured men,
Or shaken from his seat one musing god.—
Again the air is cloven; I have seen
Fane-crownèd promontories, curving sweeps
Of silver shore, islands, and straits, and bays;
And bright beyond, the myriad ocean stream.
And O, beyond—beyond!—O shelter me!
Bow down! Cover your eyes!

Confused Voices.

Terrible wings!—
Light awfuller than darkness or the sea!—
O spirit of sharp flame amid the burning!

A Boy's Voice.

My hands are on my eyelids, and my knees
Shelter my face. O mother, lay thy breast
About me, and shut out the killing light,
Before my eyeballs and my brain be dead!

Deukalion (on his knees, with outstretched hands).

Of late mine eyes were quenched, and now I see.

Pyrrha.

Thine eyelids are not open, but thy face
Searcheth into the radiance. Father, cease!
Look not upon it with thy soul. Thy face
Is terrible with beauty in the light.
I cannot look upon thy seeing face.
Take not the mortal glory on thy face!
Bow down — O let me shield thy sightless eyes!

Deukalion.

Burning is laid unto the roots of the world;
The deep spouts conflagration from her springs;
And fire feeds on the air that feeds the stars.
Out of the sea has burst, from rended deeps
Of the unthought-on rearward has leapt out
The appearance of the glory of the sun,
Filling the one side of the roaring world
With creatures and with branch-work of pale fire;

And through the woods of fire the beasts of
fire,
The birds and serpents and the naked souls
Flee, that their fleeing startles the slow dead
Through all their patient kingdoms, and the
gods
In their faint spheres are flown and passion-
ate.

A Man's Voice.

My soul is among lions. God, my God,
Thou see'st my quivering spirit what it is!
O lay not life upon it! We not knew
The thing we asked for. We had all forgot
How cruel was thy splendor in the house
Of sense, how awful in the house of thought,
How far unbearable in the wild house
That thou hast cast and builded for the heart!

Lykophon.

Deukalion, speak again!

Pyrrha.

If yet thy flesh
Endure to look upon it, speak again.

Deukalion.

His soul is strong and will deliver him!
The feature of his anguish and his joy
Makes dim the light adjacent, and his soul
Is bright to overcome. He treads the glory
Over against the roaring, hitherward.
Seeing the taper of small excellent light
He lifteth in his hand, the night rolls on
Before him, and day follows after him.
The hours, the months, the seasons, and the times
Acknowledge him; the waste calls to the sown;
The islands and hoar places of the sea
Sing, as the chief of them that are taught praises.
About his torch shineth a dust of souls,
Daughters and sons, who fly into the light
With trembling, and emerge with prophecy;
And round about goeth a wind of tongues,
A wind as of the travailing of the nations;
Vast sorrow, and the cry of desperate lives

To God, and God to them crying or answering. —
Child! Æolus! My child. Where is my child?

Pyrrha.

I cannot see; the dazzle of his coming
Makes blind the place. Here, father, in thy knees!
Feel, 't is the darling head! Wild comer, when?
Hasten, have pity, we are nothing strong!
Father, how is 't with thee? Why bow'st thou down?
Thy hand is cold, thy lips are very cold. —
O gone, O gone, even at the entering-in!

A Voice.

Who are these coming down, that they are mighty
To walk with foreheads forward to the light,
Singing the mortal radiance to its face?

A Voice.

It is Pandora and the unborn men,

Deukalion's seed. She doth it of her power,
They of their weakness.

Pandora (sings, invisible in the light).

Ye who from the stone and clay
Unto godhood grope your way,
Hastening up the morning see
Yonder One in trinity!

The Earth Women.

Save us, flaming Three!

Pandora.

Dionysus hath the wine,
Eros hath the rose divine,
Lord Apollo hath the lyre:
Three and one is the soul's desire.

The Stone Men.

Save us, sons of fire!

A Woman's Voice.

Listen, they have passed.

They go with singing forward down the light.

Prometheus (below, invisible).

Thou gavest me the vessel; it is filled.

Pandora.

I am the vessel, and with thee 't is filled.

(*Pause.*)

Lykophon (whispers).

Pyrrha!

Pyrrha.

Who whispers me?

Lykophon.

Is he not come?
Is he not busied by the altar there?

Pyrrha.

Nay — Lo, the terrible taper! It is he!
I see him not; my spirit seeth him;
My heart acheth upon him busied there.
— Deukalion, O Deukalion!

Prometheus (from the altar).

Pyrrha! Pyrrha!

Pyrrha.

Prometheus, saviour!

Prometheus.

Lykophon!

Lykophon.

Lo, me!

Prometheus.

Bring me your children hither.

Pyrrha and *Lykophon* (groping forward with Æolus and Alcyone).

Here are they!

Prometheus.

Unto this twain, man-child and woman-child,
I give the passion of this element;
This seed of longing, substance of this love;
This power, this purity, this annihilation.
Let their hands light the altar of the world.
'T is yours forever. I have brought it home!

(The radiant mist fades; it is clear day, flooded with morning sunlight. The children apply the burning reed to the fuel, and fire flames high upon the altar. Pandora's voice is heard faintly, far below.)

Pandora.

Too far, too far, though hidden in thine arms;
Too darkly far, though lips on lips are laid!
Love, love, I am afraid;
I know not where to find thee in these storms
That dashed thy changèd breast my breast upon,
Here in the estranging dawn.
Unsteadfast! who didst call and hast not stayed.
Tryst-breaker! I have heard
Thy voice in the green wood, and not deferred:—
O fold me closer, fugitive one, and say where thou art gone!

Nay, speak not, strive not, sorrow not at all!
O, dim and gradual! —
Belovèd, my belovèd, shall it be?

Keep me, keep me with thy kiss,
Save me with thy deep embrace;
For down the gulfs of spirit space,
The slow, the implacable winds, now unescapably
Wheel us downward to our bliss,
Whelm us, darken us — O lethal winds! — down to our destined place.
Swimming faint, beneath, afar —
O lover, let there be
No haste, nor clamor of thy heart to see!
But I have seen, and I whisper thee
How the rivers of peace apparent are,
And the city of bridal peace
Waits, and wavers, and hardly is,
Fades, and is folded away from sight;
And now like a lily it openeth wistfully,
Whispering through its courts of light
"How long shall we be denied?
How long must the eastern gate stand wide,
Ere these who are called shall enter in, and the bridegroom be with the bride?"

ACT III.

An open rocky place higher in the mountains; in the rock-wall at one side is a rough-hewn open tomb; in the rear the stranded ark of Deukalion, caught amid great rocks, is outlined against snow-peaks and against a vast sunset cloud, full of shifting light. The funeral train of Deukalion winds up the steep path from below. Lykophon and a company of grown men carry the bier, beside which walk Pyrrha and Æolus.

Chorus of Old Men.

In one same breath
Uttering life and death,
Whatso His mouth seems darkly to ordain
The darkling signal of His hand makes vain,
And like a heart confused He sayeth and
gainsaith.
With himself He wrestles thus
Or gives this wrestling unto us.
Whichever, it is well.
O children, we are risen out of hell,

And it is pleasant evening! Daughters, sing!
Upon his way let soft and golden mirth
Be spoken round the king,
And unto heaven be told the sweetness of
the earth.

Chorus of Girls.

How shall the thought of our hearts be
said,
Here, where this averted head
Lonely walks by the lonely dead?
'T were better others sang,
Not we, not we!
For when the mighty morning sprang
Terrible in gladness from the sea,
When, entering the high places of the air,
Noontide unbelievably
Possessed them, and lifted up his trophy
there, —
Yea, all the noon and all the afternoon,
We could have put our secret by, we could
have spoken
Well before thee, O mourner, O heart-
broken!

But now, but now — Mother, mother,
We have seen one coming with thee up the steep;
His mild great wing we saw him keep
Over thee like a sheltering arm,
And the shadow of one pinion fell across
To shield the bosom of thy lord from harm;
We have seen him, the dark peace-giver, Thanatos; —
But O, we have seen also another,
Winged like him, and dazzling dim,
He came up out of the sun, yet he goeth not down therewith;
For, ever warmer, closer, as the evening falleth pale,
His arm is over our necks, and his breath
Searches whispering under our hair; and his burning whisper saith
A thing that maketh the heart to cease and the limbs to fail,
And the hands to grope for they know not what;
We would not find what he whispers of, and we die if we find it not!

Chorus of Young Women.

Ere our mothers gave us birth,
Or in the morning of the earth
The high gods walked with the daughters and found them fair,
Ere ever the hills were piled or the seas were spread,
His arm was over our necks, my sisters, his breath was under our hair!
Their spirits withered and died who then
Found not the thing that his whisper said,
But we are the living, the chosen of life, who found it and found it again.
Where, walking secret in the flame,
Unbearably the Titan came,
Eros, Eros, yet we knew thee,
Yet we saw and cried unto thee!
Where thy face amid exceeding day more excellently shone
There our still hearts laughed upon thee, thou divine despaired-of one!
Though o'er and o'er our eyes and ears the heavy hair was wound,
Yet we saw thee, yet we heard thy pinions beat!

Though our fore-arms hid our faces and our
brows were on the ground,
Yet, O Eros, we declare
That with flutes and timbrels meet,
Whirling garments, drunken feet,
With tears and throes our souls arose and
danced before thee there!

(*They place the body in the hewn vault of the rock.*)

Pyrrha.

Go down now. I and Æolus will watch
Till dawn, when ye will come to shut the
tomb
And sing him to his peace.

Lykophon.

Some few with thee
Will hold the watch, for safety.

Pyrrha.

None. Alone.

(*The others go down the path, leaving Pyrrha and Æolus seated by the tomb; a girl lingers behind, and when the last figure has disappeared, throws herself at Pyrrha's feet.*)

Rhodope.

See, it is Rhodope, thy handmaiden!
Behold, thou knowest. He loved her. She
would stay.

Pyrrha (touching her head).

Thy heart shall take no fear. O, stay with us!

(*The voices of the young men are heard, descending.*)

Chorus of Young Men.

When, to the king's unveilèd eyes
The rended deeps and the rended skies
Seemed as a burning wood, —
Iacchos! Iacchos!
When flame took hold of the place of the
dead,
And burning seized on the throne of God,
And birds and beasts and the souls of men
As a wind of burning fled, —
Iacchos!
Yea, in the blinding radiance when
The Bringer of Light by the altar stood,
Iacchos! Iacchos! Evoë!
We saw thee, we knew thee, we cried upon
thee!

We had lost thee and had thee again!
Plucker of the tragic fruit,
Eater of the frantic root,
Shaker of the cones of raving, sounder of
the panic flute
Over man and brute,
Iacchos!
Hunter in the burning wood,
Planter of the mystic vine,
From the spirit and the blood
Crusher of the awful wine,
Iacchos! Evoë! Iacchos!

(*The voice dies away in the distance. Silence.*)

Æolus (whispers to Rhodope).

See'st thou? The cloud!

(*Touching Pyrrha.*)

Mother, What means the cloud?

Pyrrha (raising her head).

How, child?

Æolus.

The cloud. See how it lives within!

Pyrrha.

'T will rain; he brought us back the blessèd rain,
And storm, and natural darkness, with the light.

(*Bows her head again.*)

As also to our hearts the shutting-in
Of rain and natural darkness.

Rhodope (looking up from Pyrrha's knees).

All the hours
Since long ago at dawn, the livelong hours
Of glory, since he brought the morning back,
The cloud has piled itself, and wondrous lights
Have been thus restless in it.

Æolus.

Where is he?

Pyrrha.

I know not, child. It may be that he sleeps,

Being weary ; or he wanders with his love
To gaze upon the gladness of the world.

Rhodope.

No one has seen him since he fetched the light.
They say of him — I heard the old men say —

Pyrrha.

The sun goes down : we will be silent now.

(*Silence. Æolus and Rhodope, leaning together, fall asleep. Pyrrha kneels by the tomb, with hands stretched aloft upon the king's breast.*)

Pyrrha (speaks low).

Thou whom my glad heart once deliberately
Chose, and this morning suddenly with tears
Chose, and was chosen, and was made thine at last
In the destroying light — Deukalion, lord,
The day is past, the evening cometh on.
Once more to thy full-wishing lips I hold

The chalice of my heart up, husband! husband!
For night begins to pour her voices out,
And thou art stayed for on the voiceless hills.

(*She lifts her head and listens. In the distance Pandora's voice is heard, sharp and agonized.*)

Pyrrha.

For thee too, then! Even also for thee
He smote the rock; thy spirit thirsted too
Afar there in the desert of thy joy,
And came and drank against the morning ray
Waters of trembling. By the pools in haste
Thy soul stooped, plucking herb and flower of pain
That groweth newly there, by the new stream!

Rhodope (runs with Æolus, and crouches beside Pyrrha).

Pyrrha! Mother Pyrrha! Look, alas,
Lo, how it comes upon us! The bird! The bird!

Pyrrha.

What — where? How suddenly has darkness fallen,
And now as suddenly 't is light again!
How terribly the lion thunder roared
Leaping along the mountains to the sea!
—What saw ye? What went by us in the wind?

Rhodope.

Look where the giant wings rock down the slope!

Pyrrha (gazing below).

God's bird of wrath! Swift is thy wrath, O God,
Strong is thy jealousy!

Rhodope.

Awhile I slept;
Then as I looked and wondered at the cloud,
The restless lights flushed angry, and all the west
Shone stormy bright with ridges of blown fire.

The cloud flamed like a peak of the fiery
isles,
Where in the western seas Hephæstos toils.
Then from yon cloven valley in the midst
Came forth the wings and shadow of the
bird,
And grew towards us vaster than storm, more
swift
Than I could cry upon him, and passed down.
Once o'er the plain and o'er the ocean
straits,
And twice o'er the old olives by the stream
Where the folk rest to-night, his shadow
wheeled,
And now he towers straight upward like a
smoke,
High, high, into the evening.

(*Pandora's cry is heard again; she appears in the rocks above the tomb, gazing upward. After a moment she comes down and kneels beside Pyrrha, hiding her face against the rocks. Pause.*)

Pyrrha (in a low voice, gazing at the cloud).
Deemest thou

That he will yield himself unmurmuring up,
Or will he make wild war along the peaks?

(*Prometheus enters swiftly from below, and raises Pandora. They stand clasped in each other's arms beside Pyrrha, who, still kneeling, draws herself up to gaze into the king's face, then clasps Æolus with one arm and with the other the knees of Prometheus.*)

Pyrrha.

Leave us not yet, before another dawn
Comes, bringing surety! For the giant dark,
Seeing thee absent, may arise again,
And Python lift unnameably his head
In hell, hearing the gods hiss him awake.

Prometheus.

Be comforted; it is established sure.
Light shall arise from light, day follow day,
Season meet season, with all lovely signs
And portents of the year. These shall not fail;
From their appointed dance no star shall swerve,

Nor mar one accent of one whirling strophe
Of that unfathomed chorus that they sing
Within the porch and laughing house of Life,
Which Time and Space and Change, bright caryatids,
Do meanwhile pillar up. These shall not fail;
But O, these were the least I brought you home!
The sun whose rising and whose going down
Are joy and grief and wonder in the heart;
The moon whose tides are passion, thought, and will;
The signs and portents of the spirit year, —
For these, if you would keep them, you must strive
Morning and night against the jealous gods
With anger, and with laughter, and with love;
And no man hath them till he brings them down
With love, and rage, and laughter from the heavens, —

Himself the heavens, himself the scornful
gods,
The sun, the sun-thief, and the flaming reed
That kindles new the beauty of the world.
(*He draws Æolus and Rhodope to him.*)
For you the moon stilly imagineth
Her loiterings and her soft vicissitudes;
For you the Pleiades are seven, and one
Wanders invisible because of you;
For you the snake is burnished in the
spring,
The flower has plots touching its marriage
time,
The queen-bee from her wassailed lords
soars high
And high and high into the nuptial blue,
Till only one heroic lover now
Flies with her, and her royal wish is prone
To the elected one, whose dizzy heart
Presageth him of ecstasy and death.
For you the sea has rivers in the midst,
And fathomless abysses where it breeds
Fantastic life; and each its tiniest drop
Flung from the fisher's oar-blade in the sun

Has rivers, abysses, and fantastic life.
For your sakes it was spoken of the soul
That it shall be a sea whereon the moon
Has might, and the four winds shall walk
upon it, —
Also it has great rivers in the midst,
Uncharted islands that no sailor sees,
And fathomless abysses where it breeds
Mysterious life; yea, each its tiniest drop
Flung from the fisher's oar-blade in the
sun
Has rivers, tempests, and eternal tides,
Untouched-at isles, horizons never hailed,
And fathomless abysses where it breeds
Incredible life, without astonishment.

(*He bends over Deukalion.*)

O death, majestic mood! Transfigured brow
And eyes heavy with vision, since the time
They saw creation sitting like a sphinx,
Woman and lion, riddling of herself
At twilight, in the place of parted souls —

(*He pauses, looks at the lighted cloud, and below at the darkening earth, where a mist is beginning to rise.*)

As far as being goes out past the stars
Into unthinkable distance, and as far
As being inward goes unthinkably,
Traveling the atom to its fleeing core,
Through world in world, heaven beneath
wheeling heaven,
Firmament under firmament, without end,—
To-day there is rejoicing, and the folk,
Though ignorant, call us blessed in their
hearts.
Yea, He who is the Life of all this life,
Death of this death and Riser from this
death,
Calleth us blessed in his heart of hearts;
And once again, in the dim end of things,
When the sun sickens, and the heaven of
heavens
Flames as a frosty leaf unto the fall,
In swoon and anguish shall his stormèd
heart
Cry unto us; his cry is ringing there
In the sun's core! I heard it when I stood
Where all things past and present and to
come

Ray out in fiery patterns, fading, changing,
Forevermore unfaded and unchanged.

Æolus.

Behold, alas, mother, look up!
O haste, let us be hidden in the rocks!

Pyrrha.

The wings that were a little cloud in heaven
Shed doom over the third part of the north;
And now he slants enormous down the west
Toward his throne and eyrie in the cloud.

(*In the background, about the ark of Deukalion, the figures of the Stone Men and Earth Women emerge, and stand darkly outlined against the sunset cloud. Prometheus speaks low to Pandora, who falls at his feet.*)

Pandora.

I would be there with thee, love. O, not here!

Prometheus (stooping over her).

There where I go thou art; there, even now

Thou cried'st me to thee, and I come, I come.

(*He lays her in Pyrrha's arms, and disappears in the rocks; he emerges on a higher level behind, and turns westward.*)

(*Pausing beside the ark.*)

O rude and dazèd spirits! Ye shall grope
And wonder toward a knowledge and a grace
That now we dream not of; then loneliness
Shall flee away, and enmity no more
Be spectral in the houses and the streets
Where walk your primal hearts in the large light
That floods the after-earth.

(*He raises his arms over them.*)

Out of these stones
I build my rumoring city, basèd deep
On elemental silence; in this soil
I plant my cool vine and my shady tree,
Whose roots shall feed upon the central fire!

(*He crosses a rocky stretch leading to the western heights over which the cloud rests, and disappears*

in a mist-filled pass. Æolus and Rhodope creep closer to Pyrrha and Pandora, sheltering themselves from the chill of the rising mist, which slowly covers the scene. There is a long silence, broken by faint peals of thunder.)

Æolus (whispers).

Mother, the mist was gray and thick to breathe
But now ; and now 't is thin, and flushes red
As if all round the forests were aflame.

Rhodope (whispers).

Hush ! See'st thou not it is the mighty cloud,
That flames more fiery when the thunder speaks ?

(*Heavy thunder ; Pandora starts wildly up.*)

Pyrrha (drawing her down).

Thou spirit bird, that sangest all night long
And mad'st sweet utterance from the secret shade
Where his wild heart spread coolness in the sun,

For thee to flit and sing, — O look not
out!
Still hide thee in my breast!

(*Pandora sinks back. Pyrrha whispers to Rhodope.*)
Rise thou, and look!

Rhodope (rises and speaks in a low voice).

Over against the region where he went
Thunder has torn the curtain of the mist,
And out of moving darkness soars the
cloud
Like as a shadowed ruby, but above
Like as an opal and a sardine stone
Sun-touched to the panting heart; and in
the midst
Are shapes throned on the moving of the
lights,
Who ride the wrathful lights, and are the
lights.
Up through the driving fringes of the mist
Battle a living splendor and a gloom.
O, while the shapes gather and wait at gaze,
That pharos of our peril in the straits,
That treader of the cups of gladness out

In the sun's vineyard for us — Mother!
Mother!
Look hither, look at last, for it is time.
Up through the crud and substance of the
cloud
Prometheus wrestles with the bird of God!

(*Pyrrha rises, lifting Pandora.*)

Æolus.

Look how the sudden wind has quenched
the cloud,
And them that were therein; and how its
blowing
Shoulders the mist away from the keen
stars
That rushed out at the fading of the lights!
Look you, the cloud comes on us in the
wind!
It tramples down the mountains, and above
Reaches abroad in darkness, blotting out
Place upon place of stars.

Rhodope.

The smoky air

Climbs up and eddies round us and falls
down,
Rolling and spreading wider than the world!

(*As the cloud advances, Pandora goes toward it with outstretched hands, and pauses beside the prow of the ark, among the Stone Men and Earth Women, while deeper and deeper darkness drifts over the scene. The voices of Pyrrha and Pandora are heard as from the midst of the cloud.*)

Pyrrha.

Vast sorrow, and the voice of broken souls;
A cry as of all kinds and generations,
Times, places, and tongues; or as a mother
Heareth her unborn child crying for birth.

Pandora (sings).

A thousand æons, nailed in pain
On the blown world's plunging prow,
That seeks across the eternal main,—
Down whatever storms we drift,
What disastrous headlands lift,
Festal lips, triumphant brow,
Light us with thy joy, as now!

Pyrrha.

A sound of calling and of answering;
Answer or watch-cry of all desperate lives
To God, and God to them calling or answering.

(*The Stone Men and Earth Women sing, their voices growing fainter as they descend the valley behind.*)

The Stone Men and Earth Women.

We have heard the valleys groan
With one voice and manifold;
Stone is crying unto stone,
Mould is whispering unto mould.

The Stone Men.

Hear them whisper, hear them call,
"All for one, and one for all,
Dig the well and raise the wall."

The Earth Women.

"For the nations to be born,
Root away the bitter thorn,
Reap and sow the golden corn."

Rhodope (to Pyrrha).

Hear'st thou this yet that thou didst whisper of,
Or is all silence now even to thee?

(*Pyrrha does not answer. Pandora's voice is heard, also from the valley behind, but more distant.*)

Pandora (sings).

I stood within the heart of God;
It seemed a place that I had known:
(I was blood-sister to the clod,
Blood-brother to the stone.)

I found my love and labor there,
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
My ancient rage, my old despair,—
Yea, all things that were mine.

Rhodope (to Æolus).

Doth not the cloud go by us? Yonder, see,
A star looks dimly through. And there, and there
'T is all awake with stars!

Pandora (sings).

I saw the spring and summer pass,
The trees grow bare, and winter come;
All was the same as once it was
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
I felt God walk and gaze about;
He spoke; His words seemed held apart
With gladness and with doubt.

"*Here is my meat and wine,*" *He said,*
"*My love, my toil, my ancient care;*
Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

"*Here are my seasons: winter, spring,*
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for; everything
As on my heavenly hills.

Rhodope.

How swiftly now,

As if it had a meaning in its haste,
The cloud-bank fades and dwindles in the north!

(*Starlight and silence. After a time, dawn begins to break in the east. Pyrrha rises and kneels again by the tomb. As the light increases, Æolus and Rhodope climb higher among the rocks and watch for the rising of the sun. Below, the voices of the young men are heard.*)

Chorus of Young Men (ascending).

One large last star, not yet persuaded well,
Expected till the mountains should declare;
But from his hesitant attitude,
From his wild and waiting mood,
Wildly, waitingly there came
Over sea and earth and air
And on our bended hearts there fell
Trembling and expectation of thy name,
Apollo!
Now the East to the West has flung
Sudden hands aloft, and sung
Thy titles, and thy certain coming-on;

Wheeling ever to the right hand, wheeling
ever to the dawn,
The South has danced before the North,
And the text of her talking feet is the news
of thy going forth,
Apollo! Apollo! Apollo!

When radiance hid the Titan's face
And all was blind in the altar place,
Then we knew thee, O we cried upon thee
then,
Apollo! Apollo!
Past thee Dionysus swept,
The wings of Eros stirred and slept,
And we knew not the mist of thy song from
the mist of the fire,
As out of the core of the light thy lyre
laughed and thundered again!

Eros, how sweet
Is the cup of thy drunkenness!
Dionysus, how our feet
Hasten to the burning cup
Thou liftest up!

But O how sweetest and how most burning
it is
To drink of the wine of thy lightsome chal-
ices,
Apollo! Apollo! To-day
We say we will follow thee and put all
others away.
For thou alone, O thou alone art he
Who settest the prisoned spirit free,
And sometimes leadest the rapt soul on
Where never mortal thought has gone;
Till by the ultimate stream
Of vision and of dream
She stands
With startled eyes and outstretched hands,
Looking where other suns rise over other
lands,
And rends the lonely skies with her pro-
phetic scream.

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